

The news of the death of the world's most notorious terrorist and leader of the 9/11 attacks came swiftly and unexpectedly.

Although we are learning that U.S. intelligence officials located and began spying on Osama Bin Laden's Pakistani compound in August, the final decision to take out the terror mastermind was not made until late last week.

On the morning of April 29, just before he prepared to leave the White House to travel to Alabama to view tornado damage, President Obama gave final approval to the secret military operation.

At approximately 3 p.m. central time on May 1, two U.S military helicopters carrying Navy SEALs landed at Osama Bin Laden's hide-out in an upscale residential community north of the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. The location, surrounded by the homes of retired government officials and even an elite military training academy, seemed an unlikely refuge for the head of Al Qaeda. Yet, months before, our intelligence traced Bin Laden's personal couriers to the front door of the three story compound framed by high walls topped with razor wire.

The military operation lasted only 40 minutes. The elite team entered the compound and after a brief exchange of gunfire, located and killed Bin Laden. Four others were also killed in the assault, including one of Bin Laden's sons, and a woman who was caught in the crossfire.

The United States has been in pursuit of Al Qaeda's leadership since the horrific 9/11 attacks almost ten years ago that claimed the lives of nearly 3,000 people in New York City, Arlington, Virginia, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

For those who lost loved ones on 9/11, as well as for those who have lost loved ones in the subsequent war on terror, the death of Osama Bin Laden was emotional news. The spontaneous celebrations in the streets of Washington, DC, and around the country signaled America's collective feeling of relief upon learning of the death of the world's most wanted terrorist.

President Obama deserves credit for authorizing the mission and our military personnel – the best trained and most capable in the world – deserve a tremendous amount of respect and praise for their performance in delivering an end to the reign of Al Qaeda's founder and chief.

But we shouldn't be fooled into thinking that Bin Laden's death ends the terror threat against the United States. The opposite can be argued, as Al Qaeda operatives have vowed revenge attacks for the death of their leader. Nevertheless, the elimination of Bin Laden is a significant psychological victory against Al Qaeda – not to mention the additional benefit of capturing internal Al Qaeda data.

### **Tornado Recovery:**

While the national news cameras have largely retreated from north Alabama's tornado ravaged communities, the effort to clean up and rebuild really hasn't yet begun. The toll of that terrible April 27 evening still tugs at our hearts. Nearly 240 people were killed and thousands of homes were destroyed. Whole communities in Alabama and across neighboring states were practically erased from the map.

Southwest Alabama was spared this latest round of destruction, but we have also suffered deaths in Washington County from spring tornadoes. Tornado season is far from over.

Along the Gulf Coast we know well the destructive potential of Mother Nature and we understand the pain that many of our family and friends in north Alabama are now facing.

We also know a thing or two about being on the receiving end of generosity. Folks and businesses from all over central and north Alabama and across the South responded to our calls for help after Ivan and Katrina, and we'll never forget it.

Recently, the Organized Seafood Association of Alabama brought up hundreds of pounds of fresh shrimp and fish from the Gulf Coast to serve to storm victims in Tuscaloosa. Others

throughout southwest Alabama are also lending a hand - raising money and collecting needed items to transport to north Alabama.

Alabamians know how to come together and I am convinced that we will be stronger after this latest challenge.

### **Honoring Honor Flight Veterans:**

Last week, 89 World War II veterans from Atmore to Eight Mile, left Mobile aboard Honor Flight V for a special VIP visit to Washington, DC, and the World War II Memorial. I was honored to personally welcome them to their Memorial.

These members of America's "Greatest Generation" are both an inspiration and a continuing source of pride. We can never thank them enough for defending our country and saving the world from evil.

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721 or visit my website at <http://bonner.house.gov>.